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MEETING THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE THROUGH SCHOOL PROGRAM INNOVATIONS IN RURAL AREAS.

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THE RURAL TO URBAN MIGRATION SEEMS TO BE PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE TO TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE--(1) BRIGHT YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN, AND (2) POORLY TRAINED YOUTH SEEKING BETTER LABOR MARKETS. IF THIS "BRAIN DRAIN" AND MIGRATION FLOW IS TO BE STEMMED, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO PROVIDE AN IMPROVED RURAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM. WHILE SEVERAL NEEDS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED WHICH WOULD IMPROVE RURAL EDUCATION, THE MOST CRUCIAL AND PRIMARY OF THEM IS THE IDENTIFICATION AND EFFECTIVE USE OF HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES. THIS NEED IS BEING PARTIALLY MET THROUGH THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965, BUT MANY OF THE SMALLER, MOSTLY RURAL SCHOOLS SIMPLY HAVE NOT HAD THE ABILITY OR STAFF TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE AVAILABLE FUNDS. TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS FEDERAL ASSISTANCE, MANY OF THE RURAL SCHOOLS HAVE JOINED TOGETHER, FORMED REGIONAL EDUCATION CENTERS, AND CREATED A NEW CONCEPT COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS COORDINATED PLANNING. HOWEVER, EVEN THESE EFFORTS PLUS THE NEW TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES WILL NOT BE ENOUGH TO MEET THE NEEDS OF RURAL EDUCATION WITHOUT A CONTINUAL SEARCH FOR NEW APPROACHES TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF RURAL YOUTH. THIS SPEECH WAS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE ON RURAL YOUTH, OCTOBER 23-26, 1967, WASHINGTON, D. C., SPONSORED JOINTLY BY THE U. S. DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, INTERIOR, AND LABOR, OEO, AND THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON YOUTH OPPORTUNITY. (ES)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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MEETING THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE THROUGH SCHOOL PROGRAM INNOVATIONS IN RURAL AREAS

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Rural youth, like all other youth need quality educational programs (1) to meet their full human potential in a rapidly changing world and (2) to fulfill their responsibilities in a democratic society.

Like many of their urban counterparts, many of our rural youth are being denied the opportunity for an education that makes it possible for them to learn at their own rate and in their own way.

(1) The technology of today's world, (2) our national wealth, and (3) our own determination to end human deprivation now for the first time, makes it possible to provide our rural youth with the education and training required for them to not only live effectively in the 21st Century, but to contribute to the improvement of that society.

This national conference is indicative of the fact that we have recognized the existence of a problem and are determined to solve it. (1) Recognition of need and (2) determination to meet it are on the beginning end of any change continuum. This must be followed by the assignment of priorities, the development of program strategies, and finally, implementation of programs.

Secretary Freeman has spoken of (1) the absence of job opportunities in rural areas, (2) the dwindling and sometimes total lack of educational, health, and social advantages; (3) unattractive communities, and a pervasive feeling of hopelessness as well as a lack of confidence in the future which have combined to force 20 million rural people into our urban areas since 1950.

Who were these people who made the move from the countryside to the city?

Like Americans who engaged in mass migrations in earlier periods of our history, they were of all types. But there is strong evidence to indicate that two types were particularly prominent among them. At the upper end of the spectrum were the bright young men and women who sought new challenges and broader opportunities--and found both--in our cities. At the other end, were thousands upon thousands of poorly educated, poorly trained youth seeking better labor markets--and largely because of their lack of education and training, they have been unable to find urban jobs sufficiently rewarding to sustain themselves and their families.

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The very bright and the exceptionally able probably will always remain more mobile than their less skillful and less fortunate fellows.

But if rural America is to retain its historic vitality, if it is to overcome the threatened decay of its economic and social life, efforts must be made to slow the "brain drain" which is costing our rural towns and farms vast numbers of its most able youth.

We know from experience--and have known for many years--that our able youth constantly seek greater opportunity for themselves and their families. For this reason, they are likely to abandon low opportunity areas in favor of other regions, particularly those offering good educational facilities, satisfying employment, and culturally enriching experiences.

Industry is highly conscious of the need for good educational and cultural facilities in a community. It is one of the first and foremost resources examined when new plant sites are being considered. Only by building excellent educational programs in our rural areas can we hope for them to achieve desirable levels of economic development.

Today, I would like to describe some of the activities which are being supported by the U.S. Office of Education to improve rural educational resources--and thus help slow the migration to urban centers while enabling rural communities to retain some of their brightest minds to plan and build for tomorrow and beyond. The same programs will tend to slow the rural-urban migration of poorly trained youth and thus impede the growth of urban ills of poverty and unemployment.

Many of the educational needs in rural areas already have been identified.

1. We know we need improved educational programs which can provide a bridge between today's experience and tomorrow's conditions.

2. We know that better-trained teachers are needed.

3. We know that cultural isolation and lack of adequate communications have hampered educational attainment.

4. We know that family poverty and accompanying hopelessness and despair result in low educational motivation.

5. We know that rural areas find it difficult to obtain and retain well qualified educational personnel.

6. We know that rural education and training too frequently is oriented toward serving today's needs instead of tomorrow's demands. This is based on the false assumption that the child will follow in the occupational footsteps of his parents.

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Having recognized these shortcomings--and many related ones--the Office of Education's Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education has made improvement of rural educational opportunity one of our top priorities for the current year and for as many years as it may be necessary to maintain special efforts to ensure quality education for our rural youth. We have ranked this in priority right alongside the need for improving inner-city educational opportunity.

The summer of urban violence which we have just endured has not clouded our vision nor our views about the needs of the countryside. In fact, we see a close relationship between the urban problems which we now are experiencing and poor education.

If we had performed the educational task which we should have during the past several generations--when the majority of our population lived in the more relaxed, congenial atmosphere of rural America, I doubt that big city school superintendents would face quite as many problems as they do today.

We delayed for far too long--but at last we are on the road to a brighter, better educational future in all of America, rural and urban.

When the needs of rural education in America are examined, it immediately becomes apparent that the most crucial and primary need is human and financial resources and their effective use.

The Webb County Schools in South Texas where I started my teaching career, is one of many small school districts serving small student populations and drawing on limited tax bases. The Webb County Schools are simply unable to support the kind of specialist and management staff which modern education requires. For instance, I taught Math, English, Science and Physical Education. Couple this situation with the high mobility of the best trained teachers and administrators and you have dual problems of imposing proportions: Insufficient money to hire the variety of trained teachers needed and relatively low salary scales which are unattractive to the most able and well trained.

Without money and manpower, effective planning is difficult and implementation of new and promising educational programs becomes virtually impossible.

With passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Congress declared it to be a national policy to help school districts solve at least some of their most pressing educational problems.

Title I of that Act provides funds to help local school districts cover some of the unrecovered costs incurred in educating the children of the nation's poor.

Under Title II, funds were provided with which books and other instructional materials could be obtained--and hundreds of elementary and secondary schools in rural areas established school libraries for the first time.

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Under Title III, support was made available on a competitive basis to permit establishment of supplementary educational centers and services. This support was designed to provide schools with "high risk money" to introduce promising new educational practices being derived from research, experimentation and intuition. It was designed to help bridge the gap between educational research and practice.

Under Title IV, greatly expanded educational research activities were initiated.

Under Title V, State departments of education were provided with additional resources with which to strengthen their operations and improve the services provided to local school districts.

Later, Title VI was added to provide assistance in the education of the handicapped and Title VII was adopted to round out dissemination activities authorized under the other titles of the Act.

Those were the provisions of the historic law which is helping to upgrade the quality and quantity of elementary and secondary education in the United States.

We are now starting the third year of operations under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act--and its beneficial effects are in evidence throughout American education.

Soon after the law was implemented, it became clear that many of America's smaller, mostly rural schools did not have the ability or the staff necessary to take full advantage of the funds which it offered. (1) New Programs had to be planned, (2) new personnel had to be recruited, (3) new services had to be provided--and many rural schools just weren't up to the task.

From the national perspective, it became obvious that new techniques were needed if the potential benefits of the law were to reach the intended beneficiaries in rural areas.

Small school districts throughout the country began abandoning their "go it alone" attitude and banding together to jointly plan and implement new programs. By combining their meager local and State resources with Federal assistance they were able to obtain the necessary technical assistance to make optimum use of new resources. A new kind of inter-school cooperation began marching alongside the traditional inter-school athletic competition which previously had been virtually the only contact between many neighboring rural districts.

From this new spirit of cooperation there have emerged new concepts and practices which we commonly refer to as "coordinated planning."

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One result of such cooperative planning is a series of supplementary centers which have been established under Title III of the Act. These regional centers are providing rural schools with specialized services which the cooperating schools could not afford individually.

Services being provided to participating schools include:

1. Comprehensive planning and evaluation services.

2. Personnel for curriculum development.

3. Special education programs for the educable mentally retarded.

4. Administrative services, including data processing.

5. Pupil personnel services.

6. Inservice training programs.

7. Consultant and supervisory services.

8. Audiovisual and instructional materials.

Texas has developed a plan under which the 214 counties of the State are divided into 20 regions or intermediate units, each of which is to have its own regional center. The State provides matching dollars for a centralized (IMC) Instructional Materials Center.

Funds available under Title III of the National Defense Education Act are used by the centers for inservice education and funds from Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provide planning, development, and evaluation components for them.

Future plans call for each regional center to have data processing facilities.

South Carolina, Wisconsin, California, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, North Carolina, and a number of other States have made or are now developing similar plans for intermediate regional units.

Approximately 500 regional centers now are being supported across the country and present plans call for approximately twice that number to form a nationwide network--to put at least one regional center within 60 miles of every school in the country. Approximately two-thirds of the 50 States now have either formal or informal regional arrangements. Funds provided under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act are making this possible.

From these regional centers and their close associations with regional edu-

cational laboratories established under Title IV and through sustained contacts with the educational community across the nation, the most promising new educational practices and programs are being channeled into rural school districts.

The Appalachian Regional Laboratory, which covers West Virginia and parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, is concerned with the rural educational problems caused by the geography and isolation of the Appalachian region. The laboratory's initial efforts at combatting the problems of regional isolation led to the concept of "educational cooperatives" in the Appalachian area. The cooperatives will utilize technology, mobile facilities, and existing resources to upgrade both the quality and the breadth of education available to students in rurally isolated schools.

The other 19 regional laboratories supported by Title IV are engaged in a variety of activities, many of which are related to the needs of rural education.

Through the combined efforts of the Title III regional centers and the Title IV regional laboratories, rural schools are being assisted in planning effective new programs for the use of funds allocated to them from more than one billion dollars provided under Title I for disadvantaged school children and for more effective use of Title II instructional resources.

Planned and operated locally, the regional centers are in a unique position to provide rural schools with special services and program planning which meet the unique needs of the area and use all available local resources.

And educational programs and practices are being improved in ruaal areas through other imaginative applications of new resources.

1. In Indian River County, Florida, a regional educational coumcil serving six rural counties has been established to help schools identify educational needs, plan and develop and implement new programs to meet them, and assist in evaluating outcomes.

2. In Grundy, Virginia, the local schools cooperate with an area college in a program designed to improve the training of administrators, supervisors, and teachers. College personnel conduct courses at a local high school concentrating on (1) modern curriculum ideas, (2) uses of audio-visual aids and other readily available instructional media, and (3) special methods which can be used in teaching disadvantaged Appalachian children.

In three counties of New York State's Catskill Mountains, an innovative program using modern communications media is now demonstrating that specially printed materials, films, slides, displays, museum and art exhibits, audiotapes, transparencies on overhead projectors, group conferences by telephone,

and video-tape recorders with television cameras in the schools can fundamentally improve and expand educational opportunities in rural areas. Through a complex television system, the schools and homes in this area are being provided with programs from four educational television stations, prepared video-tapes, and video-taped local community activities. I believe this program very likely will become a model for the nation's rural areas.

Two thousand miles west of the Catskills, in Arizona's Cochise County--made famous by Doc Holliday, the Earp brothers, the OK Corral and Tombstone--17,000 students scattered over an area larger than Connecticut and Rhode Island combined are receiving psychological services for the first time. Two psychologists and two parochial schools each month, interviewing students referred for counselling.

Eighty-four youngsters who go to school on Block Island, located 13 miles from Rhode Island in the Atlantic Ocean, are participating in a Tele-Lecture Math Project which holds major promise as a means of reaching isolated schools. Using two telephone lines to the mainland, a shoreside mathematics teacher in Narragansett simultaneously conducts a verbal give-and=take instructional session with the children, while activating an over-head projector to put problems on "the board."

Seven public schools are scattered along New Hampshire's short coastal border, with a total enrollment of 4,300 students. These schools and the children who attended them now have audio-visual equipment available to them for the first time, as well as a circulating library of books for both students and teachers. A truck makes daily deliveries from a central instructional materials center to the requesting schools, making it possible for teachers and students to have the benefit of the equipment and materials on short notice and without long-term, tedious advance planning. It may seem a fairly simple program--and it is--but it has brought new educational benefits to the participating schools.

A number of rural projects supported by the Office of Education are concerned with the manpower problem. Not only do they touch on (1) improved teaching materials and methods, but also focus on problems related to the shortage of specialists in the rural areas by training teachers now on the job in (a) remedial reading, (b) guidance and counselling techniques, and (c) other critical manpower skills which these schools need.

A program operated by the White Pine County Schools in Nevada utilizes summer workshops for selected teachers, followed by an inservice training program in which the selected teachers instruct those who did not attend the workshop. In this way, the skills of all personnel in the schools are improved.

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The cultural isolation which too frequently produces adults unable to adjust to the urban settings in which they later seek employment is a particularly acute problem in rural areas.

A member of my staff who attended a rural Ohio school tells me that when he completed high school that the very idea of applying for any kind of white collar job in nearby communities was something that did not even occur to him.

It was only after a year as an apprentice machinist in Dayton and another two years in the Army that he entered college and began aspiring to a white collar, professional career. Most of his high school classmates had similar mental attitudes, with no real teenage plans for leaving their own community. Today, however, only a handful of his 30 classmates still are living in their small Ohio hometown. More than half of them now are employed in urban areas and most of them have not had any formal education beyond high school.

The statistics and studies which have accumulated sometimes obscure thousands upon thousands of similar personal experiences.

Today, rural schools throughout the country are making great strides in devising programs to overcome the isolated conditions in which their students live and grow to adulthood. Innovative rural educators have put culture on wheels, on film, on magnetic tape, even on telephone wires, in order to overcome the distance which separates their students from the environment of their more culturally fortunate city cousins.

Mobile museums, traveling art exhibits and libraries, and visiting musical and theatrical groups all are being used to carry the culture of a technological society to the back country. Imaginative use of audio-visual aids also are helping to bridge the gap. And at least one western rural school reports that art instruction is being provided for the first time by using telephone lines to carry the instructional message into the classroom.

The idea of telephone transmitted art instruction intrigues me. When I was a school administrator in Tennessee, we decided that television art instruction was inadequate because our system was not equipped to send or receive in color. Perhaps we were just not imaginative enough in our use of the resources at hand.

Effective guidance and counselling for students in rural areas is a major means for broadening student horizons--but money and personnel too frequently are not available. An imaginative project in Coleville, Washington, reaches from the school into the surrounding community, utilizing the knowledge available in participating organizations outside the school to help acquaint the youth with opportunities which lie beyond the remote and economically depressed area within which they live.

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TECHNOLOGY

Nowhere has education closed the gap between classroom practice and technological advances in the surrounding environment. Beginnings have been made in some areas, but the greatest lag between the potential of technology and actual education application is in our rural areas--where much of the available technology could provide the most dramatic linkage across the expanses of time and distance which now divide rural and urban life into two different worlds.

Office of Education studies are being conducted to develop units of instruction which employ the new media. The feasibility of television instruction as a means of increasing educational quality in remote schools is being tested. In Utah, a number of school districts have pooled their interests and available resources to organize the production, procurement, and distribution of educational television programs for schools throughout the State.

In Alaska, where vast distances must be bridged if quality education is to be available to all, a project now is underway which will permit instructional television programs to be beamed to schools within a 40,000 square mile area which is sparsely populated.

Probably the most extensive use of television instruction now in operation is in American Samoa, where the island's entire student population is linked through an instructional television system. The per unit cost is in excess of $400.

These are no more than a few examples of the imaginative uses to which Federal educational aid now is being put in efforts to improve the education of our rural youth.

Much remains to be done.

The beginnings which have been made in establishing regional centers providing specialized services for several districts must be carried to completion and reality for all rural school districts in the nation.

(1) State agencies must be established which can assist the regional centers in maintaining a two-way flow of information and technical services. National coordination of the state programs must be maintained. The experiences in Jordan, Montana, and Riverton, Wyoming, must be passed on to schools in Phillips, Wisconsin, Mountain View, Arkansas, Antlera, Oklahoma, and thousands of other towns across the country if we are to get the greatest bang for our educational buck.

(2) Improved educational programs must be devised and increased teacher training efforts must be implemented.

(3) Expanded use of available technology must be accomplished.

(4) Increased liaison between elementary and secondary schools and the expertise available in institutions of higher education must be established.

(5) Better use must be made of all available resources--not only monetary, but cultural and other facilities as well.

NEW APPROACHES

But even when all these improvements have been made, it will not be enough to meet all the needs of rural education. We must look for new approaches to old problems; approaches which have not yet been considered or tried.

Perhaps we should consider rural educational parks, complete with facilities for housing students on campus who are able to make the daily round-trip from home to school.

The huge, fast, and reliable helicopters now available might be used as long distance school buses to move entire classes between their rural homes and centralized schools on a daily basis.

We should reexamine the assumptions which underline what has been called our "credential-conscious society." We should obtain qualified instructors in the various subjects from outside the trained teacher population. What small town banker could not provide instruction in economic practices? What local repairman or craftman could not provide effective instruction in welding, or woodworking, or construction?

What local newspaper publisher could not provide instruction in selling and merchandising practices common to the economic sector? What community does not have within its boundaries people with highly developed skills which could be passed along to the students through organized and coordinated instructional programs?

The skills of the classroom and the skills of a tradesman or craftman admittedly are different, but what good are the skills of the classroom if the subject matter skills are not present?

Industry, business, labor -- all have untapped manpower resources which I believe could be brought into the classrooms of rural schools to help overcome the shortage of highly trained teachers and specialists. Their skills and training can only be used through effective planning and implementation strategies, but assistance to carry out these two needs are available through regional centers and similar organizations.

EPDA

The Educational Professions Development Act has provided yet another major weapon with which to attack the long range educational manpower problem.

Dr. Nolan Estes

Signed into law last June, the new act will assist local educational agencies and colleges and universities in the task of recruiting able individuals into the teaching profession and related positions.

Programs provided by the Act will include grants and contracts for the purpose of attracting qualified persons to the field of education. Grants also will be provided to local school districts which are experiencing critical shortages of teachers in order to attract and qualify teachers and teacher aides. And to upgrade the training of elementary and secondary educational personnel, grants and contracts will provide advanced training and retraining for them.

By utilizing available resources to their fullest, by eliminating unproductive programs and practices in rural schools, by devising new educational strategies to solve continuing and emerging problems, by coordinated, cooperative efforts with other schools and educational and cultural organizations, by improved staff training, we can develop rural educational programs which will enrich the lives of all our citizens, rural and urban. We can provide education and training which will make it possible for our rural students to make the transition to urban life--if necessary, or to remain in the countryside and use their education and their energies to assist with rural economic growth and development.

Through improved educational programs we can provide our citizens with the education and cultural enrichment they need to live and work wherever they choose. We can close the centuries-old gap between rural and urban worlds, retaining the best of both.

We will stop shoving poorly-educated, ill-trained people from one year of deprivation to another, from one area to another, and will make it possible for them to live full, rewarding lives in their home communities, in our great cities, or wherever they may choose.

President Johnson has said, "We must give these millions of people a right of choice where to live. Educational improvement in the towns and cities, and countryside of this Nation will be a major step in providing a realistic right of choice to all our citizens.

We can do it. We must do it.

We are on our way. And I believe we will reach our goal.

Thank you.